



**MOKI KOKORIS**  
600 Barrack Hill Road  
Ridgefield CT 06877

moki.kokoris@gmail.com  
90-NORTH.com

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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB-7352**  
**AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES**

March 17, 2019

To: Honorable Co-Chairs Senator Douglas McCrory and Representative Robert Sanchez  
and Distinguished Members of the Education Committee

From: Moki Kokoris, 90-north.com

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the following testimony **IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 7352** – An Act Concerning Minor Revisions and Additions to the Education Statutes. I respectfully do so in multiple capacities:

***As a globally-aware United States citizen***, I am distressed at how much of our country's population believes that anthropogenic climate change is still up for debate. The primary remedy for this condition is to increase climate literacy, which would encourage shifts in attitudes and behavior.

***As a resident of the State of Connecticut***, I am proud that environmental initiatives such as Reforest The Tropics in the southeastern corner of our state have involved young students in their stewardship projects. Such endeavors are convincing evidence that climate change and sustainable development education produces positive results.

***As the founder of 90-north***, an outreach environmental education program series that offers environmental advocacy presentations to academic institutions and the public sector, I recognize that comprehensible information and subject proficiency can motivate audiences to be proactive rather than reactive – once again proving that knowledge is empowerment.

***As a teacher with 30+ years of experience across a wide range of disciplines***, I have learned that compelling lessons in school are more often brought home by students and shared with parents than visa versa. As we are witnessing, it is today's youth that is mobilizing and inspiring adults into action on climate change issues. The broader their body of knowledge of the topic is, the more sweeping their influences on shifting the world away from fossil fuels will be.

***As a United Nations representative in consultative status with the Department of Public Information***, I hear many stories from leaders of indigenous communities who are directly impacted by climate change. It is these stories that should be an integral part of any climate change education curriculum.

As most significantly, ***as the first woman of Ukrainian descent to reach the Geographic North Pole*** (April, 2003), I understand, perhaps better than most, the importance of educating the public about the negative consequences a changing climate will have. My methods of travel in April, 2003, are no longer possible due to thinning ice. This fact alone drives me to teach about climate change.

Therefore, I speak as a direct witness of the profound changes occurring in regions most people rarely hear about let alone visit.

In his famous speech, Martin Luther King Jr. did not say, "I have a nightmare." He said, "I have a dream." And my dream, ***as an advocate for the human race***, is to see climate change as a formal interdisciplinary subject in Connecticut's early grades curriculum. Such an ambitious mandate will help us all overcome our future global challenges.

For all the reasons above, I strongly encourage you to SUPPORT HB-7352 on our collective behalf...

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Moki R. Kokoris", with a stylized, flowing script.

Moki R. Kokoris